

## **§ 185.136**

(b) The transcript of testimony, exhibits and other evidence admitted at the hearing, and all papers and requests filed in the proceeding constitute the record for the decision by the ALJ and the authority head.

(c) The record may be inspected and copied (upon payment of a reasonable fee) by anyone, unless otherwise ordered by the ALJ pursuant to § 185.125.

### **§ 185.136 Post-hearing briefs.**

The ALJ may require the parties to file post-hearing briefs. In any event, any party may file a post-hearing brief. The ALJ shall fix the time for filing such briefs, not to exceed 60 days from the date the parties receive the transcript of the hearing or, if applicable, the stipulated record. Such briefs may be accompanied by proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. The ALJ may permit the parties to file reply briefs.

### **§ 185.137 Initial decision.**

(a) The ALJ shall issue an initial decision based only on the record, which shall contain findings of fact, conclusions of law, and the amount of any penalties and assessments imposed.

(b) The findings of fact shall include a finding on each of the following issues:

(1) Whether the claims or statements identified in the complaint, or any portions thereof, violate § 185.103.

(2) If the person is liable for penalties or assessments, the appropriate amount of any such penalties or assessments considering any mitigating or aggravating factors that he or she finds in the case, such as those described in § 185.133.

(c) The ALJ shall promptly serve the initial decision on all parties within 90 days after the time for submission of post-hearing briefs and reply briefs (if permitted) has expired. The ALJ shall at the same time serve all parties with a statement describing the right of any defendant determined to be liable for a civil penalty or assessment to file a motion for reconsideration with the ALJ or a notice of appeal with the authority head. If the ALJ fails to meet the deadline contained in this paragraph, he or she shall notify the parties

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of the reason for the delay and shall set a new deadline.

(d) Unless the initial decision of the ALJ is timely appealed to the authority head, or a motion for reconsideration of the initial decision is timely filed, the initial decision shall constitute the final decision of the authority head and shall be final and binding on the parties 30 days after it is issued by the ALJ.

### **§ 185.138 Reconsideration of initial decision.**

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, any party may file a motion for reconsideration of the initial decision within 20 days of receipt of the initial decision. If service was made by mail, receipt will be presumed to be 5 days from the date of mailing in the absence of contrary proof.

(b) Every such motion must set forth the matters claimed to have been erroneously decided and the nature of the alleged errors. Such motion shall be accompanied by a supporting brief.

(c) Responses to such motions shall be allowed only upon request of the ALJ.

(d) No party may file a motion for reconsideration of an initial decision that has been revised in response to a previous motion for reconsideration.

(e) The ALJ may dispose of a motion for reconsideration by denying it or by issuing a revised initial decision.

(f) If the ALJ denies a motion for reconsideration, the initial decision shall constitute the final decision of the authority head and shall be final and binding on all parties 30 days after the ALJ denies the motion, unless the initial decision is timely appealed to the authority head in accordance with § 185.139.

(g) If the ALJ issues a revised initial decision, that decision shall constitute the final decision of the authority head and shall be final and binding on the parties 30 days after it is issued, unless it is timely appealed to the authority head in accordance with § 185.139.

### **§ 185.139 Appeal to authority head.**

(a) Any defendant who has filed a timely answer and who is determined in an initial decision to be liable for a civil penalty or assessment may appeal

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such decision to the authority head by filing a notice of appeal with the authority head in accordance with this section.

(1) A notice of appeal may be filed at any time within 30 days after the ALJ issues an initial decision. However, if another party files a motion for reconsideration under § 185.138, consideration of the appeal shall be stayed automatically pending resolution of the motion for reconsideration.

(2) If a motion for reconsideration is timely filed, a notice of appeal shall be filed within 30 days after the ALJ denies the motion or issues a revised initial decision, whichever applies.

(3) If no motion for reconsideration is timely filed, a notice of appeal must be filed within 30 days after the ALJ issues the initial decision.

(4) The authority head may extend the initial 30-day period for an additional 30 days if the defendant files with the authority head a request for an extension within the initial 30-day period and shows good cause.

(b) If the defendant files a timely notice of appeal with the authority head and the time for filing motions for reconsideration under § 185.138 has expired, the ALJ shall forward the record of the proceeding to the authority head.

(c) A notice of appeal shall be accompanied by a written brief specifying exceptions to the initial decision and reasons supporting the exceptions.

(d) The representative for OPM may file a brief in opposition to exceptions within 30 days of receiving the notice of appeal and accompanying brief.

(e) There is no right to appear personally before the authority head.

(f) There is no right to appeal an interlocutory ruling by the ALJ.

(g) In reviewing the initial decision, the authority head shall not consider any objection that was not raised before the ALJ unless the objecting party can demonstrate extraordinary circumstances causing the failure to raise the objection.

(h) If any party demonstrates to the satisfaction of the authority head that additional evidence not presented at such hearing is material and that there were reasonable grounds for the failure to present such evidence at such hear-

ing, the authority head shall remand the matter to the ALJ for consideration of such additional evidence.

(i) The authority head may affirm, reduce, reverse, compromise, remand or settle any penalty or assessment determined by the ALJ in any initial decision.

(j) The authority head shall promptly serve each party to the appeal with a copy of the decision of the authority head and a statement describing the right of any person determined to be liable for a penalty or assessment to seek judicial review.

(k) Unless a petition for review is filed as provided in section 3805 of title 31, United States Code, after a defendant has exhausted all administrative remedies under this part and within 60 days after the date on which the authority head serves the defendant with a copy of the authority head's decision, a determination that a defendant is liable under § 185.103 is final and not subject to judicial review.

[60 FR 7891, Feb. 10, 1995; 60 FR 22249, May 5, 1995]

### § 185.140 Stays ordered by the Department of Justice.

If, at any time, the Attorney General or an Assistant Attorney General designated by the Attorney General transmits to the authority head a written finding that continuation of the administrative process described in this part with respect to a claim or statement may adversely affect any pending or potential criminal or civil action related to such claim or statement, the authority head shall stay the process immediately. The authority head may order the process resumed only upon receipt of the written authorization of the Attorney General or of the Assistant Attorney General who ordered the stay.

### § 185.141 Stay pending appeal.

(a) An initial decision is stayed automatically pending disposition of a motion for reconsideration or of an appeal to the authority head.

(b) No administrative stay is available following a final decision of the authority head.